

Message Text

CONFIDENTIAL

PAGE 01 BRUSSE 02027 031938Z

71

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FM AMEMBASSY BRUSSELS

TO SECSTATE WASHDC 396

INFO AMEMBASSY KINSHASA

C O N F I D E N T I A L BRUSSELS 2027

E.O. 11652: GDS

TAGS: PFOR, BE, CG

SUBJ: BELGIAN-ZAIRIAN RELATIONS: CHROME AFFAIR

REF: A) KINSHASA 2847 B) BRUSSELS 1945

1. SUMMARY. ALLEGED "COMMANDO ATTACKS" AGAINST ZAIRIAN EMBASSY IN BRUSSELS WERE MINOR INCIDENTS FOR WHICH GOB HAS OFFERED TO PAY DAMAGES. GOZ CONTINUES TO NEGOTIATE ON COOPERATION WITH PRIVATE BELGIAN FIRMS BUT RELATIONS MAY BE FURTHER AGGRAVATED BY SATIRICAL PRESS ARTICLES. CASE CITED BY DAVISTER AS PRECEDENT FOR BANNING CHOME BOOK WAS ONE IN WHICH GOB PROSECUTION UNSUCCESSFUL. END SUMMARY.

2. FONMIN DIRECTOR AFRICAN AFFAIRS LEBRUN TOLD EMOFF APRIL 2 THAT GOZ REFERENCE TO "ATTACK" BY BELGIAN "COMMMANDOS" ON ZAIRIAN EMBASSY BRUSSELS (REF A) IS CONSIDERABLE EXAGGERATION OF TWO RECENT INCIDENTS. IN FIRST, DURING EVENING THREE WEEKS AGO, INEBRIATED BELGIAN AND DUTCHMAN WANDERED PAST EMBASSY. DUTCHMAN SAW LIGHT IN GARAGE AND ENTERED IN SEARCH OF LAVATORY. POLICE GUARDS DETAINED BOTH, THEN RELEASED AFTER THEIR STORY WAS VERIFIED. SECOND INCIDENT WAS MORE SERIOUS. ON NIGHT OF MARCH 28-29, UNKNOWN PERSONS SPRAYED EMBASSY WALLS AND POSSIBLY SEVERAL DIPLOMATIC AUTOMOBILES WITH PAINT, THEN FLED. ZAIRIAN EMBASSY PROTESTED INCIDENTS IN NOTES TO
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PAGE 02 BRUSSE 02027 031938Z

FOREIGN MINISTRY, COMPLAINING OF LACK OF PROTECTION. IN REPLY

FOREIGN MINISTRY OFFERED TO PAY FOR ANY NECESSARY REPAIRS.

3. LEBRUN EXPECTED NO FURTHER MAJOR DEVELOPMENTS IN DISPUTE OVER CHOME BOOK UNTIL "REAL REASONS" FOR MOBUTU'S ACTION BECOMES CLEAR. CONTINUING IN VEIN OF HIS EARLIER COMMENTS (REF B), LEBRUN EXPRESSED BELIEF THAT ZAIRIAN COMPLAINT IS PLOY TO AVOID REIMBURSEMENT FOR PROPERTIES RECENTLY EXPROPRIATED. HE SAID HE IS STILL CONVINCED THAT MOBUTU DOES NOT PLAN TO SCUTTLE AGREEMENT WITH SOCIETE GENERALE DES MINERAIS AND NOTED THAT FORMAL AGREEMENT FOLLOWING UP SETTLEMENT REACHED IN FEBRUARY WAS CONCLUDED APRIL 1 AND WAS TO BE SIGNED SHORTLY THEREAFTER. LEBRUN POINTED OUT THAT, ALTHOUGH BELGIAN OFFICIALS ARE BEING OSTRACIZED IN ZAIRE, GOZ HAS BEEN ENGAGED IN DISCUSSIONS WITH PRIVATE BELGIAN FIRMS. SGM NEGOTIATION JUST CONCLUDED IS ONE EXAMPLE OF THIS POLICY. ANOTHER IS TALKS ON COOPERATION EARLY LAST WEEK IN VIENNA BETWEEN GOZ TRANSPORT COMMISSIONER EKETEBI AND REPRESENTATIVES OF COMPAGNIE MARTIME BELGE AND SABENA.

4. SITUATION, HOWEVER, COULD BE FURTHER AGGRAVATED BY APRIL 3 EDITION OF SATIRICAL WEEKLY "BAN", WHICH FEATURES FRONT PAGE LAMPOON OF "AUTHENTICITY" UNDER HEADLINE, "END TO OUR TROUBLES? ALL THE WAY AGAINST EVERYTHING WITH MOBUTU," WHICH INCLUDES PLAY ON WORDS IN SOUNDING OUT ZAIRIAN PRESIDENT'S NAME: MAUZ BOUT TOUT. ARTICLE POKES FUN AT DROPPING OF CHRISTIAN NAMES IN ZAIRE THEN "REPORTS" ON "DECOLONIZATION" OF STREET NAMES IN BELGIUM UNDER DIRECTION OF PIERRE DAVISTER (E.G. BLVD LEOPOLD 11 TO BECOME BLVD MOBUTU). ACCOMPANYING ARTICLE SAYS NEXT BELGIAN PRIME MINISTER SHOULD INCLUDE IN CABINET TWO ZAIRIAN MINISTERS "KWENDA MTUTU" AS ADVISOR TO PRIME MINISTER AND "DAVISTER PEPE KOKO" TO CONTROL PRESS, ESPECIALLY ALL ARTICLES ON ZAIRE AND ITS LEADER. CARTOONS SHOW LOW-RANKING ZAIRIAN OFFICIAL RECEIVING APOLOGIES OF KING BAUDOUIN AND ADVISOR TO POPE SUGGESTING THAT CANONIZATION OF MOBUTU MIGHT ALLEVIATE CHURCH'S PROBLEMS IN ZAIRE.

5. FOR HIS PART DAVISTER DEFENDS SELF IN APRIL 3 EDITION OF

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CONFIDENTIAL

PAGE 03 BRUSSE 02027 031938Z

"SPECIAL" AGAINST RESOLUTION PASSED MARCH 30 BY BELGIAN PRESS UNION CRITICIZING HIM FOR LACK OF PROFESSIONAL ETHICS IN PUBLISHING EDITORIAL WHICH ENCOURAGED FURTHER PHYSICAL ATTACK ON CHOME (REF B). HE ALSO REPORTS THAT GOB TECHNICALLY HAS MEANS UNDER 1852 LAW TO BAN LITERATURE OFFENSIVE TO FOREIGN CHIEFS OF STATE. HE CITES 1964 SEIZURE OF "POURQUOI PAS" ARTICLE ON KASAVUBU AS PRECEDENT. DAVISTER (WHO WAS

AUTHOR OF OFFENDING ARTICLE) FAILE TO MENTION THAT GOB ENCOUNTERED SO MUCH OPPOSITION FROM PARLIAMENT, PRESS AND PUBLIC FOR TRYING TO APPLY LAW BELGIANS VIEWED AS HAVING BEEN VIRTUALLY IMPOSED ON THEM BY NAPOLEON 111 THAT IT DROPPED CASE AGAINST POURQUOI PAS. STRAUZ-HUPE

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